

# FATHERLAND

By

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

*Author of "Midstream," "Down Among Men,"  
"Routledge Rides Alone," etc.*

Behind all petty political results of the Great War surges the cosmic passion of a whole world warring to end war.

The meek and lowly are tired of being dragged from their work to serve as cannon-meat. Dumb are they, but a great novelist here voices their demand for freedom—sings the Great War's immeasurable significance as the last war.

America's message, the plowman's message, to the proud war-lords.



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*With "The Army of the Dead" by Barry Pain*

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## THE ARMY OF THE DEAD

BY BARRY PAIN

I dreamed that overhead  
I saw in twilight gray  
The Army of The Dead  
Marching upon its way,  
So still and passionless  
With faces so serene,  
That scarcely could one guess  
Such men in war had been.

No mark of hurt they bore  
Nor smoke nor bloody stain;  
Nor suffered any more  
Famine, fatigue or pain;  
Nor any lust of hate  
Now lingered in their eyes—  
Who have fulfilled their fate,  
Have lost all enmities.

## FATHERLAND

A new and greater pride  
So quenched the pride of race  
That foes marched side by side  
Who once fought face to face.  
That ghostly army's plan  
Knows but one race, one rod—  
All nations there are man  
And the one King is God!

No longer on their ears  
The bugle's summons falls;  
Beyond these tangled spheres  
The Archangel's trumpet calls;  
And by that trumpet led  
Far up the exalted sky  
The Army of The Dead  
Goes by, and still goes by.

Look upward, standing mute;  
Salute!



# FATHERLAND



# FATHERLAND

## I

A LABOR-GANG was trenching for tile in a near field and I went to the boss to hire one of his men. Of course I could have one, he said, remarking that they were treading on one another's feet, as it were. . . . "Take Joe over there. . . . Hai, Joe!"

A derby hat at any season is unmitigated, but in the first days of August, in the splendid fury of summer, this approach was not unlike the passing of a kitchen-range. Joe was clapped in it. The whole field had a pent and airless look—from this crown of labor, heavy, sagging and mossy. I inquired of the boss if Joe were hopelessly addicted. He feared so, but added:

## FATHERLAND

“You’ll forget that. Joe’s a bull with a pick.”

I led him to the house and brought forth a wide light straw. In firm quiet manner, I took the bleak hearse from his head and hung it from a projecting stone high against the cobbled masonry of the stable, wondering if it would affect the pigeon-crosses, as Jacob’s rods of hazel and chestnut at the water-troughs ring-streaked the new-born calves. Joe’s troubled face looked less lardy under the straw-thatch, though his eyes turned often to the cobble work. In the afternoon I found the straw hat hanging there, too gentle and humane to alter Nature in any way, unless to puzzle the hawks for a day or two, or stimulate the spiders to new manners of suspension. The derby was back in place, clamped solid under the arc of the pick.

The idea was to shelve a Roman path from the shore to the top of the clay-bluff, a fifty-foot rise. Joe, comprehending

## FATHERLAND

presently, tore loose at the bank with a brute strength altogether new to me. I regarded him frequently and with alarm lest he turn blue. He could forget himself in that rending labor, as one at his best forgets the instrument when typing with machine. Labor, the heaviest and least inspiring, yet it filled him so that he asked no more. Having found his work, he lost himself and the illusion, time; gave himself to his task—a celestial profit in that mystery which touches the spirit of creativeness and silently fits a man to live indeed.

It was the children who found out that Joe was Russian; that he had been in this country for a year, had a wife and baby boy at home, shortly to be sent for. In the afternoons they would fill his dinner-box with tomatoes, radishes and cucumbers. Meanwhile the path shadowed forth from the bluff and Joe paved it with gravel from the beach.

I found it good to be with him from

## FATHERLAND

time to time, and it came to me with pathos, but very clearly, that he had come to America to find his Fatherland. He represented in a way the excellent simplicity which Tolstoi turned back to re-discover, although the simplicity that Tolstoi yearned for is ahead. He recalled to my mind Manchuria, too; the Christless havoc of the war-days there, and the morning I awakened to hear a brigade of his fellow-peasants shouting forth its soul in song—singing, it seemed to me, as men never sang before, led singing to the slaughter of Liaoyang—faces like Joe's, miles of them, decent simple men, the stuff to make gods from, and murdered like a pestilence of vermin a few days afterward, not by the Japanese, but by the debauched appetites of their princes.

And now Russia was at it again, all Europe in frightful demolition, and the poor of the world to pay. First the flower of the people, then the stalk—all but the root to go. Every ship and shell, the last

## FATHERLAND

confiscations and the first by the strong hands of war, indemnities demanded by victor, wounds of pride, the cessations of almighty trade, even the infringements of neutrality, to be paid by the poor of the world—the bewildered and hunger-driven poor, first in blood and then in famine and labor. And from the undermen, from the maimed and the heavy-laden must the earth be replenished again.

A last time. . . .

## FATHERLAND

**I**T was one of the children who very recently asked Joe if he would have to go away and fight. His pick poised and then lowered with its own weight. His hard, rounded palms opened to the sky. A look of childish terror came into his face.

“No—no—no!” he said, shaking his head, as a child aroused from evil dream. I saw that there was added terror, because the little boy had spoken it.

It signified the destruction of all he had worked for, the wrecking of his dream. Not vague, nor dull, nor greedy, this dream—a clear, clean, home-making, labor-giving conception rather; a dream that had found its form through thousands of tons of labor, hewn and graven in earth-clay, but clearly done in the sight of God, I think, an equitable holding.

It was not the fear of war, but the fear he would be called. Across the world, but still cornered. In the heart of a strange



## FATHERLAND

country, yet he was not his own law. Certainly, Joe had not found his Father here. . . .

He lived with desperate frugality, slept in the corner of a machine-shop; yet every stroke outdoors of his strong hand was constructive and not for self, done with simple valor for a woman and child. He was established in the beginnings of individuality, because he worked for others; heroically on his way, requiring no sentiment to call forth the honor of worthy men. For there is but one path. Genius nor prophet need ask to be more wholeheartedly on the way. One path without beginning and without end, but every path runs two ways. Those who rise against the grade, who face the East, are brothers.

Yesterday he touched the old hat as I approached, leaned the pick-handle against the rim of the trench, for he was hip-deep in the ground, and rolled a cigarette, the one delicate thing that Joe does with his hands.

## FATHERLAND

"I go back to Russia," he said, quietly.

"To your family, Joe?" I asked.

"No—to fight."

No terror now, not even the opposite swing to apathy. The call had come, the dream was ended, his prayer failed, his entity lost. The pressure of centuries had prevailed upon the beginnings of his personal spirit. . . . He worked until six as usual, said good-bye as usual. The children ate their supper in silence. Joe meant Russia and world-war to them; to us all the war was more intimate and horrible. . . . "*In a space of fifty square yards,*" I read from a Belgian chronicle, "*the bodies of two hundred Germans lay crying for burial.*"

"Why, that's just the size of the vegetable garden," said one of the children.

At the end of dusk that night I went out alone to the edge of the bluff. Stillness, save for the crickets and cicadas; the trees still and the sky pure, the white magnolias blooming again. The Lake tranced

## FATHERLAND

the last of the light; lakes of corn were a silent background; children laughed in the distance among the pleasant lights of the neighboring cottages. The two noblest planets seen from earth were in the sky and no others yet, a rare visitation—Jupiter rising in the East, Venus setting in the West. The land teemed with richness and peace; and the white immortal reflections in the sky completed the globe of promise. Yet fifty years from now they will say (never quite comprehending) of this waning summer of nineteen fourteen, “In the midst of that year all Europe went suddenly insane.” . . . A last time.

## FATHERLAND

**H**OW clear it is that lawless ego turns insane—and yet, so long have the multitudes lost themselves in obedience to a few families that have never learned to govern themselves, much less their race; the many fallen victim often to imperial sons who have not the intelligence to keep themselves clean, mere galvanisms of degraded passion. Inbred, luxury-lapped, world-fattened princes, played upon by every illusion and destructive force of the world of matter, nurtured in nests of softening, out of which any common man, not stupid, would pluck his own son as from a net of the devil; and the fortunes of whole races of men in the hands of such decadents—down-grade men, their *backs* to the East, drawn not to Heaven nor any ideal, but like other brute material, answering with little or no complication the pull of the earth's center. Before God that man is king only who has mastered himself, and this is the last time for the

## FATHERLAND

multitudes to be slaughtered and betrayed by the mock divinity of war-lords.

It was very clear (though I had been unable to perceive it before this rending of Europe and the world) that there must be a great war to end war. In no other way was that master of lies to be destroyed—that the only safe peace is in the presence of great armaments. All the seers and prophets of the world could not make themselves heard in the din of gun practise and riveting armor plate.

The poor will die and the poor will pay, and then the poor will speak—that is the high and thrilling hope of this hour. Peace, not as a policy, but as a principle—the old love of man for his neighbor—that is the very essence of our future welfare and nobility. It is tragically clear now that war, in its very nature, could not die a lingering death, but must die with violence—a passing that will rend the world.

A passing, too, of the last imperial

## FATHERLAND

house, and all the barbarism and flunkeyism appertaining; for the spiritual deformity of kings can only survive, and continue to be a breeding-bed of war, where a corresponding flunkeyism exists in the breasts of the people. The passing of Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, Romanoff and other national parasites and baneful autocracies, all roots and lines that ramify them, not only cut down but burned afterward—the trade-cunning of Krupp and his like with them—that this may be the true and final extermination of the army worm. The strong peasant stalk and bloom where they cling and devour—this is the great sacrifice. A last time, for the poor of the world must now perceive the truth. The final tragedy of God's many—that the dream and the spirit of peace, conceived in agony, brought forth in this planetary parturition of war, may emerge not a dream, but clothed in the body and brain of flesh to move forever among men.

## FATHERLAND

*I*N a space of fifty square yards, the bodies of two hundred Germans lay crying for burial," and on the same sheet this cry of America, "Now is the time for us to profit!" The States of America must go to their knees to be rid of that temptation—the voice of the trade mind at its worst and lowest, a blend of green and yellow, of covetousness and cowardice, in the presence of Europe's ineffable disaster, which if not overcome now will bring us to the pass of Europe or worse, before it is done. The spirit of peace flees to fields of carnage from the very atmosphere of this conception.

Not a Fatherland, but a Prussian America which raises this voice:

"Let us seize the non-belligerent world-trade now. Let us build, buy and lease ships now for this trade. Let us spend the next few years in the forced growth of our navy; by every sacrifice to accumulate such a navy as will stand with Europe

## FATHERLAND

in strength, and protect our new world-trade, when damaged Europe returns for her markets——”

Neighboring Europe gashed open—the stench around the world from her uncovered dead—and every scream of the European tragedy now and in the more terrible months to come—the result of *that identical predatory instinct* and no other.

The entity behind such a voice is without humor.

There is also an America, not Prussian, which is acquiring a new mind and heart from the moaning and misery of its neighbors, and is striving to put away forever the tarantula from its own breast. This America has perceived that the affairs of an upright man among his fellows does not compel him to live in a fortress; and that this is a national verity also.

Real America has found the impulse in this cataclysm to become a truly productive people, not to develop its already powerful trade acuteness. Production



## FATHERLAND

does not mean to multiply by mechanical means any single article to such an extent that greater energy and acumen must be spent in marketing than in production. This is a fundamental evil of the age now closed by war. Real America perceives that a nation with land commensurate to its population needs only to develop its own riches, its own particular potencies, and the peculiar genius of its people, through Fatherland-stimulus for the production of its best, the production of quality not quantity, in order to compel clean trade with all the world—because national resources are like individual resources; there are no duplicates.

No law nor reason prevents us from accepting in silence the certain advantages accruing from Europe's abandonment of trade, but aggressively to accumulate trade under naval protectorate in this hour (in which it seems that the high God is winnowing the earth to find His few) such is the final debauchery of virtue.

## FATHERLAND

Here is the chance for us to become workmen, not squirrels. The very streets are full of strange new needs, because we are suddenly denied the products of European workmen. We miss their mastery in chemicals and minerals and wood. Here is the spur of need to make us workmen and masters of the secrets of matter—but to remain *masters* of matter in spirit and truth, the whole reason and purpose of manhood, adding to matter the intuitions of the spirit, and not making matter our God, as later Europe has done, for world-wars and every wretchedness and lamentation is the price of just that.

Never before in the history of the United States was there such time for austerity and contemplation, such need for sensitiveness to reality, for flippant and temporal things to be put quite away—such a need to burn and weep and pray for the abatement of agony and the new reign of God in the world—such a need to give and not to gain, to love and not to seize.

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FATHERLAND II

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## II

SOME days after Joe left I rode by a field of grain where the army worm had camped for loot and outrage. The owner was making an effort to save part of the crop.

“But it’s not much use,” he said. “To be a killing force the solution must be strong enough to check the grain, too. Between the poison and the worm there’s not much chance of harvest. I’d have done about as well to plow under the whole business.”

It was one more of the perfect analogies of man’s relation to the source of things—analogies that literally abound in vine and grass and shore. . . . I thought of the fires and deluges that stand traditional in the dim background of all races of men. The revelations of geology show that there has been shuffling of features, utter dishevelments of the face of the

## FATHERLAND

globe—an eye now where a tooth once lay, a nostril where an ear reposed. I thought, too, of the first and most significant realization which the reading of astronomy imposes: that of the exceeding delicacy of the earth's present position; how, indeed, we are dependent for life and all that now is upon the small matter of the tilt of the poles; that we, as men, are products, as it were, not only of earth's precarious position, but of her more precarious tilt.

The oldest and most respectable of all questions now recurred: What is it for? What is life for? What *grain*—what is the desired harvest?

Man can only answer *man*. There is no other answer within his intellectual rims. It can't be man's body. The ultimate significance certainly cannot be the flesh of man which dies so freely. At the same time it is clear that the flesh is an instrument of manifestation, a stage of being, as the worm is a part of the cycle

## FATHERLAND

which attains wings in the butterfly. The desired *grain* of the tilted earth, then, is the certain power behind the flesh; in fact, that power and not the flesh, is man himself. In short, the *grain* is the soul of man which puts on flesh from time to time, possibly, as a traveler takes different vehicles to make his journey.

That which reaches the end of the journey is the *grain*; and since the flesh helps to forward the immortal home, it becomes a profound consideration. . . .

Sermonizing—but not in a religious mood, as usually considered. The thundering drive of every thought was the Great War; yet I had no thought nor care for nations and their boundaries, nor for kings, politics, dumas, reichstags, colonial interests, the almighty markets—not even for Rheims and Louvain.

I was thinking of Joe, and the peasant millions, his brothers.

Two, five, seven thousand the day just now they are slaying the child-souled peas-

## FATHERLAND

antry; herding them by the million in the midst of the most demoralizing conditions the darkened minds of men ever invented. We need not think of the women and children—just of the men. Yesterday, to-day and to-morrow, the peasants are slain—until we have lost the relation of numbers.

And this—the darkest winter that the world has ever known—is only a culmination of the misery of the peasantry. They have been preyed upon and massed and manhandled in the best of times and seasons. Worse than death can happen to the peasantry. The ultimate significance has to do with the souls of these children, and their souls have been steadily cruelly smothered through the fat years of peace. This smothering of souls is not accomplished by death, but by life.

There have appeared among us giants of desire—men literally who want the earth; strong men of baronial appetites, whose aspirations at their highest are level-eyed, never uplifted, mainly perverted.



## FATHERLAND

These are the whip-masters and soul-smotherers of the peasantry. These are also the king-keepers. They are masters of the near and the obvious and the palpable; because of their very dexterity in the manipulation of material affairs they are tolerated as the rulers of men. They and their agents are everywhere—first hand they move among the peasantry, and the stupid middle world calls them the great men, within the hearing of our children. What can the peasant do but believe, and in his terror and havoc formulate such an ideal for himself in the future? It is known now, even in the public schools, that the formulation of any ideal is the matrix of the action to be.

Sorrow can only sweeten, but the prolonged effects of theft and greed, the ever-tightening coercion; the noise and the shine and the meaning of coins, the loss of the love and meaning of labor; the trade-ideal ever before the fresh impressionable eye, and proclaimed by all voices

## FATHERLAND

to be earth's glory in the highest—such is the soul-smothering of our children, the peasantry; a kind of reptile poisoning that has entered and done its work; and now the devouring is on, a more loathsome but less destructive process, for only the bodies suffer that. The low poisonous passions of the world stupefied first, before the devouring of war.

The peasantry of any race is its soil and substance. It is the bed of its human nature; it holds the future. Hope and mystery attach to it, and all the glowing mystery of promise that ignites the ardor of real parenthood. The true great men of the world, having put on a larger dimension of consciousness, turn to the peasantry for the symbol of the cosmic simplicity to come. They pray for the simple healing faith which so often is the very conduct of life of the peasantry. If the world were ruled by the true great men, and not by the predatory, the younger-souled people would be guided and guard-

## FATHERLAND

ed with a passion and purity that would hallow the earth. For the peasant is so earnest to be led, so eager and ready to follow. That is the heart-rending pity of his plight to-day. *He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

There are men in Russia, in America, who would die for Joe and his brothers; who would die daily to make him see; men who love and understand him, who would not kill him, but teach him the paths of beauty and be taught by his blessedness. But these are not the fathers of the countries; often, rather, they are the hunted and the hanged. Still, they and their peasant children are the salt of the earth that has kept it from decay; they are the grace of the world—the holy ones, who have stayed so far the planetary plowing.

## FATHERLAND

**I** WRITE in the midst of the greatest battle the earth has ever known—the issue as yet undecided. Yet with all the intensity of this hour, partisanship does not enter. In fact it is not without a shudder that one thinks of what a conclusive victory of either side would mean at this time. Final victory at this hour would be a triumph of militarism, an extension and revitalizing of the old, the vile; for the same destructive forces that have been proven and branded for every seeing eye; a victory of imperialistic armaments, of field strategies, of diplomatic sagacities, and these no less than the blood-letting of men are of the old hells of earth, and the sources of all our misery.

This war is the anointing of the grain-field. The stand of grain must endure not only the devouring of the parasite, but the withering of the poison. Yet if there is a harvest to come; if there is hope of harvest, of any grain or balm or future

## FATHERLAND

light—the parasite, at least, must be destroyed.

Not only the kings, but the king-keepers. “Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.” It would seem that the war has begun that, but the work is not yet well advanced. Victory for either army system at this hour, and all the diplomatic asseverations, evasions, rejoinders, surrejoinders, and attainders to follow would not cleanse the field. Rather it would seem to me to start to heaven such a stench, and open to the sky such a spectacle of blasting as would send the Husbandman right quickly for the plow.

There is a line of cause and effect running truer than human vision from the breaking-out of throne-taints in 1870 to the heart of the present conflict. There are no clean hands among the principals of this, the Great War; and the New Era (if earth be spared the plowing under) will see it, and its heart will not soon cease to bleed for those who have paid in blood

## FATHERLAND

and famine. Final victory now for either cause, and the poor of the triumphant connection would not be the sooner fed, nor more decently fed in the future. Yet they are being slain in such numbers that the press of the world cannot give space to the names.

## FATHERLAND

THEY call them serfs in Russia, sometimes *moujiks*. It is true they are children; that they require to be led; as yet they are not conscious individual forces, but talents to be accounted for by their fathers. So far they have had the steel and the leaded thong, the impregnation of every crime.

Nicholas says: "I will enter Berlin, if I have to sacrifice my last *moujik*"—as one might say, "my last copper."

That alone should be enough to stop war, if men were men. . . . Less than ten years ago the peasants came in to see Nicholas; from the far country and the near; through the snow, they came, hungry, afoot, in thousands, big thoughts in their breasts. They had reached the ends of their powers and endurance, they thought, and had come quietly to ask help of the father. They would place their story before him and all would be well, for the father would understand.

## FATHERLAND

You recall that Nicholas saw them coming, and fled. All his life he had fled from palace to palace. It was all he knew. Fleeing, he called to Vladimir to treat with them, and Vladimir turned the treating over to his Cossacks. That Sabbath, you remember, the red flower bloomed in the snow—covering the city streets it burst into bloom—the red flower of the peasantry which is redder than the blood of kings—the lives of thousands sprinkled upon the snow that Sabbath day.

Truly they had been taught to call him Little Father; and he, the flitting ghost of the palaces, means to use the last of them now. He has called them by the million—and God pity the wretched miracle of it!—they seem to obey.

So long as they obey, the war must go on, and the moment they cease to obey—there can be no war again.



## FATHERLAND

**T**HERE is no spiritual vitality remaining in the entities known as Prussia and the Balkans, nor in the Russia of Nicholas, although all the potentialities of splendid spiritual flowering are still within the hearts of the peasantry. What remains in the entities represented by these names is an obsession, a down-pulling and destroying energy which has galvanized with false life the entire organism within these boundaries. The Europe of such names is a house of madness. Enough for the moment to say that the struggle of good and evil in England, Germany and France, if finished in this hour, would be a triumph of the old and the evil and the insane.

The passion of a New Era must triumph from this war, or after it will come effacement and the deluge.

For the ideals of the world at this hour are not lifted ideals, and it is a late day in the world for low ideals, even for the

## FATHERLAND

level eye. War should have been extinct centuries ago. Our only hope is that the carnage from which we now avert our eyes is war's self-destruction, and the final rebuke upon the several peoples who have been found so blind as to allow the making of war to rest in the hands of matter-masters and decadents. There is but one answer to this rebuke—a refusal longer to engage.

The New Era—or else what remains for a little time longer, will not be worth living in for those who have held the dream. For such—the New Era, or none here. The United States of America is as deeply concerned in this war as France or Germany. Those of our people who are not lifted from the profound ruin of personal intents by the conditions now abroad in the world are meaningless in this crucial and terrible hour of the earth's judgment as a spiritual experiment. And you who moan so loudly over Rheims and Louvain—I ask you, what do you think

## FATHERLAND

of the destruction of the peasantry? The New Era does not need ancient relics for its ideals of beauty, but very much it needs the souls of men.

Either a Fatherland, or chaos to come. Every voice out of the past has called us to do away with boundaries, to end imperialism and material greed. Every invention of the past fifty years has laughed at separate language, at distances and man-made boundaries and every estrangement of people from people. The planet is one in wire and voice and meaning; the oneness of God and Nature has been the cry of every seer.

We are not estranged spiritually, nor in ideal. The growth of our individuality is monstrous, until it turns from self to service. From Buddha, from Laotze, from Jesus, to the latest voice among us, so lost now in pandemonium, the spirit of man is proclaimed to be the *grain* of the earth, and the spirit of man is one.

If there is to be a New Era, there is

## FATHERLAND

to be a Fatherland, but the blasphemous  
fatherlands of to-day shall not enter.  
Destroyers of children shall not enter.  
Except that ye become as little children,  
ye may not enter.

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FATHERLAND III

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### III

I WAS sitting out of the wind on the Roman path that Joe had made; trying to think it out on the basis that Mother Earth was yet young, and far from the season of Fall plowing. It didn't come clearly, but a profitable impulse did occur, and this was to make a call I had long promised myself, upon a happy man, named Milt, some miles up the road. . . . I came at length to an eight or ten acre piece under glass—the gusty shine of late October upon it—a day that didn't know just what to do next. Milt came toward me, a collie pup in his arm, and a little girl tugging at his free hand. This is a glimpse of his story:

“We came out here five years ago, a bit whipped in health and otherwise from the city. We dared to be poor—had our faces fixed for that. The second fall I found a tomato-seedling sprouting out of

## FATHERLAND

due time in the door-yard, and transplanted it under our first small bit of glass. I couldn't have been very busy that morning. Well, that turned out to be the legacy——”

“I heard you were making a vulgar lot of money,” said I.

“No, I almost fell for that, but thought better of it. I'm making enough. The seedling came along fine and husky, and about Christmas I saw where to begin for next year—to market a fine tomato just long enough after the northern season so that people have a relish for them, and before the southern producers begin to ship north in quantity. But a man could do it with berries or melons or asparagus.”

“You say you almost *fell* for making a lot of money?” I asked curiously.

“Well, you see it opened big. I found myself in the tension for more, more. I planned vast acreage, even a glass works, but I began to feel lame in the head along



## FATHERLAND

the same old routes that the town had worn so deep. Then it occurred to us—what we had come out here for. We talked it over and decided to call in all the wild expansion stuff; allowed that we had better leave some of the county for other men to play in, and slowly the fever subsided.”

I was thinking that the City must have bitten Milt rather deep. Then it occurred that he would never have noticed that tomato-seedling if his brain had been full of fortune dreams that morning. He had come close to smashing the jewel afterward, by his own word. . . . Now, his holdings were proportioned generously to the needs of his house; he had them gratefully in hand, also well-in-hand his squirrel and beaver instincts and the barn madness. Milt's eyes were not held to the ground; he was not dependent upon others; his lines of interest were not stretched out unduly; in fact, he was in a safe and sane relation with mundane

## FATHERLAND

things. Not in a single detail, so far as I could see, did the analogy break between Milt's establishment and a happy nation. . . . Milt was bringing up his own children.

"I don't care for the schools," he said. "They didn't do a good job for me; and while they may be a lot better now, they're not right. At least I don't think they are right, and thinking that way I certainly should dare to gamble on the education of my own children! A man doesn't want to use too much glass for this kind of seedling, however——"

Milt wouldn't have time for this, had he been caught in the great fortune dreaming. . . . A nation should bring up its own children. No individual would dare to risk himself as a teacher in a true Fatherland.

Just so surely as Milt would have ruined the unique vitality of his house by falling into the dream of great expansion, just so surely does an intrinsically small

## FATHERLAND

power with a passion for wealth and colonization threaten, in its most amicable moments, the very principles of peace; and in the end destroy itself and all suspected tissue surrounding.

Milt has land proportioned to the needs of his establishment, a free highway to the market, also time and disposition to develop the particular values and potencies of the entire scheme; having these he is a successful and happy man, who can laugh, if he were of that temper, at all ulterior insanities. A successful and happy nation must have these. But that nation which in its proper self is but a capitol and suburbs, which becomes a formidable power through an aggressive policy and the mastering of the destinies of alien peoples; its interests sprawled over the several seas; one of the necessities of its mastery, an enforcement of the conviction upon the alien peoples of their own inferiority; the processes of its mastery being frequent displays of power

## FATHERLAND

and a steady system of artful diplomacy;—such a nation is not making of itself a fatherland, but something very much like a spider-land, acceptable only to such gods of the universe as delight in pure spider-like tendencies.

If Milt were to ride forth on a conquest of the county, he would first be compelled to make his house into a citadel, thoroughly to barb his lands, set watch-dogs and arm all hands. Rivalry of material interest abroad enforces domestic defence. Tenuous lines of conquest, the concentration of riches at home—these call for jaws and claws and fighting instincts, without which no spider can keep up a prosperous lair, pleasantly hung and strewn with drained carcasses.

Neither man nor nation can honestly or decently overrule another and continue long to be a power; for the lie which makes me say, "I am superior to you," will destroy me in due time before your

## FATHERLAND

eyes, though I drive you daily with goads, and take the milk from your babes.

Never was there such a time for a statement of simple truths. America stands with senses sharpened by illness; at least so stands the America not Prussian.

England, Germany, France, Italy and Spain represent different stages of decay in structures not fashioned to endure. From the ripe decadence of Spain to the sharpening of wit's ends in England, each name tells the story of the rise of imperial passion, the flatulence of predatory strength, and just as surely will tell the story of miserable empty ending.

Spain now is a dull red dot in the western sky; Italy not so low nor red, though her people are scattered, without especial dominance anywhere, without coherence of principle or coördination of action, a sapped and ridden Rome, very far from an eternal city, a smile instead of that. France has not the vitality of her enemy, nor of her allies. She will be able

## FATHERLAND

to cope with neither at the end of this war. One need look no further than her own physical sterility to turn to the low west for France. She is there—part of the waning constellation which might be called *Mediterrania*. Even though her all is at stake, her fighting during the first fall days in her own vineyards will be her greatest fighting, for the stamina has been drained from the French spine.

Carlyle believed that Germany would sometime *be* Europe, but he judged from the Germany before 1870, the Germany of Goethe, Schiller, Schopenhauer, possibly in part from the Germany of Bismarck. The Germany Carlyle loved had not ceased to build its empire in the sky; but the Germany of the last fifty years has sadly forgotten the stars, and will become the example for future ages of all that a Fatherland must not be. For it was a Fatherland that turned the eyes of its children to the ground. Men of Cain's breed come from looking down—

## FATHERLAND

slayers and madmen, frenziedly getting, for that is the meaning of Cain—not pastors.

The Gods of matter are the devils of men. These gods are manifesting now afield, because the Fatherland did not teach its children to subdue matter, rather to become machine-men, slaves to matter, men of disgusting efficiency in small things and blinking deaf as the *bandar-log* to immortal things.

With all its mighty engines and perfected detail, the German war-machine will break of its own weight. It is that high mystery roughly named *morale* which wins wars.

The nation that looks down finds first of all its stomach. You can estimate the value of a soldier by the size of his girth; the larger the belt-line the poorer the soldier. The men who will win this war will win through famine. Enlarged stomachs and fatty hearts are not formed for that. Spirit, the white fire, is the stuff of *morale*,

## FATHERLAND

not sentiment. Sentiment is purely a red flesh matter which dies with each body, and does not lend itself to augment the heroism of survivors.

England is not a sentiment, but an institution. She is in at every case of obstetrics within her dominion, and by some subtle prowess becomes identified with the personality of her subjects. She is not a part of the white fire of her people; in fact she maims her genius by enslaving him to England and blinding him to the world. There is always her adhesion in the soul of a British genius which keeps it an Englishman instead of a cosmic force. Her commonest subject, treated to every abomination at home, is no sooner abroad than he lifts his head in serene contempt for all who are not English—a divine-right sort of self-conviction now denoted because it is a kind of *morale* afield, and a better thing to fight with than sentiment; also the British ranker in



## FATHERLAND

many cases has been inured to famine at home.

England, at this moment, has three fears. I believe in the breasts of those who see farthest, the least of these three fears has to do with Germany. There is devouring terror in the British heart as to what may be taking place under the yoke in India. The key to the length of the British future is India; and London, which rules the English press of the world to-day, as she did ten years ago for Japan against Russia, has so far been able to keep us from hearing India's voice. If the spirit of India remains crushed through this war, her physical tributes, together with the solid British adherence, will reckon with Russia long after France and Germany are silent.

Russia, her present ally, but ancient and structural foe, is England's third and possibly her greatest fear.

She does well to fear Russia, who holds the whip hand of the whole argument, ac-

## FATHERLAND

ording to this outlook. Russia has commensurate land for her population. She needs sea-doors and she will get them. Petrograd isn't the only city that will lose "burg" from its name. Russia is the vast new surface upon which the future of Europe is to be written. Nature is sick of writing history upon the defiled surfaces of small predatory powers. . . . Not the Russia of Nicholas—but the peasant millions of Russia, holding in its great mass the finest genius of to-day, as a clustered bee-swarm shelters its queen-mother, the future—these are the men of Europe's to-morrow. They are not yet defiled, because they are still children. These vast things move slowly.

They come from the north like all invaders; they come from the cold broad lands of poverty; they have been kept clean by the rigors of Nature, and moderate in their appetites by the thievery of their masters. These red-blooded millions have not yet had their voice in the world,

## FATHERLAND

and Mother Nature gives a voice to every people before it passes. They represent the spirit of youth which must be served. This that we hear is not Russia's swan-song, but the anthem for the birth of her new soul.

. . . They have not all been shot and hanged. There is left a leavening of a future Fatherland, which will be pure, at least in its inception, as America was. There are men in Russia who have heard the mighty music of humanity. They will sing their dream and grave their message upon the peasant soul.

Not the Russia of Nicholas Romanoff. Red Sunday was the beginning of the end forever of the Little Father. His passing and all the princes of his tainted blood will prove but an incident of the Great War. Very low in the west among the red blinking points of *Mediterrania* is Nicholas and that Russia. In the East is the Russian *novae* before the dawn, commanding the dark before the sun.

## FATHERLAND

. . . Miles of bayonets rusted in their fixity, miles of ashen faces and sodden gray coats—the dust of their tramping, the heaven of their singing. This is the Russian peasantry on the march, a moving storehouse of the earth's future spirit, the genius of her coming days. They leave the sane brown yielding earth, all gilded with the beauty of harvests, for the red fields of madness. They march from cosmos to chaos. . . . There is an end to the singing; the hour has come of fire and blood. Through the wind tattered smoke, there is the strewn field covered with silent men and writhing men. The remnant rises and marches on. . . . But one face to me, not in helmet nor cap, but in a derby, old and absurd—a face of torture and bewilderment—rising from the field and marching on. . . . “Hai, Joe, turn back to the woman and the boy! Hai, Joe, where are you marching?”

It is the peasantry of the North marching a last time to find its Fatherland.







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# FATHERLAND

By

WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT

*Author of "Midstream," "Down Among Men,"  
"Routledge Rides Alone," etc.*

With a Poem of the Great War

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THE ARMY OF THE DEAD

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B Y B A R R Y P A I N

**Q** The Great War has touched America. Out of trench and mine, toiling men go back to Europe and to unhappy death for fatherlands no longer theirs.

**Q** Will Comfort, the great war-correspondent who hates war, watched Joe, the Russian, march off—not because he wanted the music of bugles, but because he was trained to obey.

**Q** No man has a more passionate vision of the sorrow of the peasants, the men who plow and fight that kings may eat and grow great, than has Will Comfort; and here is the sharp intensity of that vision—with a new vision of the time when kings shall no longer pave triumphal highways with the bodies of peasants.

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